R. B. Machell.

R. B. Machell,
Jan. 26. 1850.
Villa Ro
Cleaning

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE,

SCRIPTURALLY CONSIDERED,

FROM

THE EARLIEST AGES

TO

THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

REV. F. CLOSE, A. M.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF CHELTENHAM.

. . . . . " HÆ NUGÆ SERIA DUCENT
" IN MALA." . . . .
HOR. ART. POET.

LONDON:

HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY;
HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1844.

CHELTENHAM : J. J. HADLEY, JOURNAL OFFICE,
Queen's Buildings.

TO

HIS DIOCESAN

THE RIGHT REVEREND

JAMES-HENRY

LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY HIS OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL

SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

CHELTENHAM, *March 30th*, 1844.

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PREFACE.

Impelled by a deepening conviction that the evils intended to be exposed in the following pages, are perilous, and growing; and seeing that as yet no systematic attempt has been made to impede their progress, the Author presents the subject in this form to the public, in the hope that more able pens may be enlisted on the same side; and that some who possess more leisure and opportunity of research than the writer of this Work, may be induced to lend their aid towards the exposure of the grievous superstitions which many are labouring to introduce into the Church of England.

The Pastor of a populous parish cannot be expected to dive so deeply into antient ecclesiastical literature as the student in his cloistered retreat: and candid minds will give the author of the following pages the benefit of this consideration:—but on topics which bear on the stirring interests of his own times—the movements of the public mind—the evolutions of doctrinal theories—the rise and

progress of popular errors—the state and temperature of the theological atmosphere, on these and similar subjects, the position which the Author occupies may qualify him to form an equally correct opinion—and may entitle him to be heard with at least the same attention as that which is yielded to the more profound scholar, or the more subtle theorist.

He would only add, therefore, that if there are any who value his opinion—any who would listen to his advice—any who believe that he would not needlessly create alarm—he entreats all such of his readers to accept his solemn conviction —(after watching the progress of present events, and comparing them alike with the rise of kindred errors in the fourth century, and in an age nearer our own,)—that some of the worst doctrinal errors of the mediæval and subsequent centuries are now gradually and systematically returning and settling down, silently and unperceived in the Protestant Church, by no other means than these, viz. THE RESTORATION OF THE EMBLEMS OF SUPERSTITION, AND THE EXTRAVAGANT DECORATION OF CHURCHES.

His convictions and his fears may be pronounced illusory,—but greater and wiser men have seen and have denounced the same evils—as will appear from the following pages:—the Author is content to shield himself behind such holy and eminent persons as Hooper, Pilkington, Grindall, and the authors of the Homilies, and he feels confident that the Protestant feeling of the country will go along with him.

Deeply concerned for the grand and fundamental truths which he believes to be at stake, he commends the cause to HIM, whose glory he desires above all things to promote.

Church Architecture,

&c. &c. &c.

That man is in a great degree the creature of external circumstances, may be asserted without any fear of being charged with the materialism of Owen, or the fatalism of the Koran. The wisest and most religious of men cannot wholly divest themselves of the various exterior influences which affect the current of their feelings, and in some degree tend to warp even the most unbending judgment. And that the generality of mankind are subject to such impressions, and are often wholly governed by them, cannot be denied.

This tendency is more observable in religious matters than in the affairs of common life: and hence the necessity of guarding with the utmost vigilance

those avenues of the imagination, the feelings and affections, by which subtle error may steal into the heart and betray it, ere it is conscious of an enemy's approach.

We are perhaps in peculiar danger of this sinister influence when we are engaged in the eager pursuit of subjects of a mixed nature, partaking partly of a religious, and partly of a secular character. When any science or study wholly unconnected with religion is the object of our pursuit, we are comparatively safe, but when that object is of such an indefinite character, that while its leading features are secular, its more remote and secondary influences are religious, then we have need of double watchfulness. This appears to be peculiarly the case with the subject before us.

Church Architecture might at the first glance appear to be a subject essentially secular, and practically material; to ascertain by diligent search the

earliest and most comely specimens of Christian Churches—to study their varieties—to class them under different orders—to select that style best adapted to modern use, and to embellish it with suitable decorations, all this appears to have little connection with religious principle or spiritual feeling.

And yet has the whole art or science of Ecclesiastical architecture the strongest possible bearing on the religious character of the country; interwoven with all its spiritual sympathies, and national prejudices, it exercises a diffusive and extensive influence even over the essential truths of revealed religion.

It will not be disputed that the cultivation of this art among the antients, had a sensible influence in forming both public morals and public taste; nay, that it sometimes held the destinies of nations in its balance!

The mighty Pyramids of Egypt—the costly and exquisitely wrought

temples of Greece and Rome—contributed not a little to fasten upon the minds of the people the idolatries with which they were identified. The clamorous shouts at Ephesus—"great is Diana of the Ephesians," may be traced in great measure to the existence of that temple erected there to her honour, which was the wonder of the world. The open gates of the temple of Janus, at Rome, proclaimed that the world sighed for peace, and when they were solemnly closed, they tended to promote and render permanent that peace which they appeared only to announce.

The prosecution of this idea would lead us too far from our particular subject: but it may safely be observed that no well informed and thinking person will for a moment deny that the architecture of the antient world, identified as it most frequently was with their idolatrous rites, tended to commend those rites to the hearts of

the people, and enlisted their pride, their science, their cultivated taste, and their national feelings, all on the side of idolatry! So that even the sceptical philosophers themselves, who despised the polytheism of the vulgar herd, cherished and upheld the system for the sake of the arts and sciences with which it was interwoven.

Now the constitution and philosophy of man's nature are unchangeable:—divers influences may be brought to bear upon them—the religion which affects them may be false or true—but the tendencies will be uniform. In other words, Christian architecture will possess as much power of affecting the minds of men as Pagan architecture had,—the structures erected in the name of Christ will tend to produce impressions in favour of His divine religion, in the same manner and degree as the temples of the antient gods and goddesses affected the minds of by-gone generations. Hence it be-

comes a matter of no little importance that Christian Churches should be built in accordance with the genius and spirit of the Christian religion,—lest while we are raising mighty structures, and lavishing on them vast sums of money, we may be fostering superstitious or even idolatrous tendencies in the souls of those who are to worship there.

As the experienced architect is disturbed by any violation of good taste, or by any departure from the rules of art, in the building on which he gazes, so should the pious and enlightened Christian be at least equally offended if he discovers in buildings consecrated to the simple worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, decorations and emblems more worthy of the ponderous ceremonial of the Jewish, or the idolatrous corruptions of the Papal system.

And inasmuch as it appears essential, more particularly at the present time, that we should form a sober and scriptural judgment in this matter,

alike remote from the barbarism of the tabernacle, and from the pompous superstition of the Vatican—a *scriptural* investigation of the subject cannot be uninteresting or uninstructive.

Ecclesiastical architecture existed long before the Christian era—and it would appear to be in accordance with sound reason, and philosophy, as well as with the principles of revealed religion, to look back over the early history of man as recorded in the Book of God, and to examine the various modes in which through succeeding ages he has been approached: —the formless spontaneous devotions of our sinless parents in Paradise—the rude altars of the patriarchs—the costly and elaborate ceremonial of the Israelites—the extreme simplicity of primitive, apostolic, Christian worship—the decorative style of the mediæval ages—the return to primitive simplicity at the blessed Reformation—and the final, glorious, perfect worship of the Re-

deemed in heaven :—all these various transitions in the method of approach to the Great God by his accepted worshippers ought to be well pondered, before we form our judgment as to the propriety or impropriety of prevalent opinions on this subject.

This then shall be the object we now propose to ourselves :—searching for truth amidst its deep fountains, in the everlasting hills of God's formation, the holy Scriptures—we shall not greatly err—and perhaps by God's blessing upon our meditations we may not only arrive at sound conclusions on controverted points—but may find spiritual edification in contemplating the wisdom of God as displayed in the beautiful adaptation of successive systems of worship to the genius of the dispensation to which they belong.

But before we attempt to follow the progress of ecclesiastical architecture from Abel's rude altar to the temple of Solomon, and thence to the modern

ages of the world—an enquiry suggests itself relative to the mode of man's approach to his Maker, as well in his state of primitive innocency, as in that of his restored perfection in the final glory. In these we justly expect to discover the most acceptable manner of worship—THAT which is most pleasing to ALMIGHTY GOD, offered as the willing homage of an innocent creature, or as the grateful sacrifice of those who once were guilty and impure, but now are redeemed, restored, and glorified. We thus gaze on man at his beginning, and at his end—as he first came forth from the hands of his Maker, and as he is again brought near to him in his final blessedness.

A wonderful coincidence is here observable: neither in Paradise, nor in CHRIST'S glorious kingdom, is there any temple! No altar—nor propitiatory—nor sacred place is there! "I SAW NO TEMPLE THEREIN," exclaims the inspired evangelical Prophet, as

he beheld the New Jerusalem—coming down out of Heaven, fitted for the new Heaven and the new earth which had already been created for its reception! * A Jerusalem—but stripped of the old Jerusalem's chief glory—A JERUSALEM WITHOUT A TEMPLE! What can this denote but that in that final triumphant state no form of worship will be found—none of those various methods of approach now so needful for man in his present state of separation from his GOD—no temple because the GOD of the temple is there—no reflectors of the image of GOD, because GOD himself is there—as it is added, "for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, and the Lamb are the temple of it!" His people see him as he is—eye to eye and face to face;—"that which is perfect is come," so "that which is in part is done away."† The building is com-

* *Revelations,* xxi. 22. † 1 *Corinthians* xiii. 10.

plete, therefore the unsightly scaffolding is removed! The journey is over, therefore the provisions of the way are needed no more. Churches, temples, ordinances, sacraments, are the means by which God reveals himself to his people now—but there will be no temple there!

And as in man's final glory, so in man's primitive innocence—there was no temple in Paradise! The holy pair, unconscious of sin, needed neither altar, nor propitiatory, nor oratory, nor sacred place of worship, for all was sacred and holy! When at the dawn of day these holy, happy beings, rose from their soft slumbers, and walked forth to meet their God and to present their welcome orisons, they beheld indeed a glorious temple! What though no stately building raised by man's device was there—no lofty spire, nor groined roof, nor intersecting arches, nor tessellated pavement—nor proud altar—nor fragrant

incense—nor gorgeous decorations—yet did they worship in God's holy temple! And when the soft mist arose, as a thin veil, before the breath of the morning, (for neither rain, nor storm, nor tempest yet were known) revealing the beauties of that creation of God, what a glorious temple burst upon their view! Beneath their feet the verdant carpet of nature sprinkled with her choicest flowers—above them, the high vault of heaven lighted up with the ascending sun—the trees and shrubs sparkling in its glories—the murmuring of the streams which "watered the garden"—the warbling of the happy tenants of the air—and the gentle lowing of cattle as yet untutored in suffering—this, and more than we can describe or conceive, was the temple, and the ONLY ONE, in which our first parents worshipped! God himself dwelt in his pure creation—he met his innocent creatures and they rejoiced! Neither man in his sinless state, nor

man in glory needs the feeble help of temple services !—an affecting, a humbling conclusion is unavoidable :— ALL TEMPLES, ALTARS, CHURCHES, AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, ARE THE BADGES AND PROOFS OF THE FALLEN, GUILTY STATE OF MAN !

This truth may well sink into our hearts, to humble our pride, and to teach us the true end of all those buildings which have since been elevated for GOD's worship—they are testimonies to the guilt of man, while they lead him to the fountains of mercy ! What speaks the blood of Abel's sacrifice—or of Noah's—or of Abraham's, or of his son's ?—"What meaneth this service"—this blood-stained altar—this writhing victim ? They tell of sin—and the sinner's doom—and the sinner's exposure to GOD's wrath ! And what meaneth that pompous ceremonial—that dark and holy place, separate and secluded, into which one man alone dares enter, and he but

once a year? And wherefore all those slaughtered animals, that river of blood —those divers washings? They testify to man's guilt, and separation from his God, and the difficulty of access to him—while they open a way thither! And what but this is taught in Christian edifices and the Christian ordinances performed in them? Why do we there assemble together? Why hear the gospel preached? Why listen sabbath after sabbath to the word of God? Why kneel around the sacred table, and partake of the memorial of redeeming love? Why? but because we all are sinners, vile and miserable, lost without CHRIST, and only kept in the right way by the healing grace of GOD which thus visits us in his appointed means!

With what feelings then of humiliation and sorrow should we contemplate a Christian sanctuary! We may decorate it with splendid masonry—lavish vast sums on its shrines, create

"a dim religious light," by means of costly painted windows;—and after we have done all, as we traverse the aisles of the stately cathedral, and muse upon the solemn scene around us—well may we exclaim—"Whence is all this?" It is sin! Sin has raised this vast pile, it is a house of refuge for the guilty! What is this temple but a lazaretto for infected souls!—What but an hospital for the reception "of the halt, and the maimed, and the blind"—it tells of benevolence and mercy, but it reminds us of our guilt and misery: and as when we contemplate some beautiful and extensive building—displaying the skill of the architect, and calculated to excite our highest admiration, and we ask—to what purpose is this building dedicated? And it is replied, "it is A LUNATIC ASYLUM!" how then does our heart sicken! The edifice loses all its charms in our eyes—we turn away in sorrow, grieving

more that man's calamity should need such an extensive receptacle of misery, than rejoicing at the benevolence which has called it into existence:—even so, a deeply pious and religious mind contemplating the noble religious edifices of his native land, will rather mourn over the madness of sin, and the insanity of vice, which created the necessity for these houses of mercy —than feel disposed to vaunt himself in their beauty or magnificence! He never can forget that there was no temple in Paradise, and that there will be none in Heaven—because in Paradise and in Heaven there was no sin!

Let then every student of ecclesiastical architecture, as he pursues his favorite subject, remember that the foundation of every religious structure in the world is laid deep in the corruptions of the human race—and that but for the sin and wickedness of man HE had lost his occupation! He

dwells among the tombs, he stumbles over the gravestones—while he searches out his favourite style;—let him not forget, in the elaborated details of an earthly structure, to record in his heart ITS ORIGIN and ITS OBJECT!

But turn we now to the book of GOD—the most ancient book: and let us trace the rise and progress of all the religious edifices sanctioned by the Almighty. Our guilty parents now have fallen from their innocency—they are banished from their abode of bliss and purity—wretched exiles, clad in the garments furnished by those victims which their sin hath slain! And now they seek an altar and a sacrifice. Abel brings a lamb of the flock, and offers it the Lord. It is not said, indeed, that he built an altar—but it appears to be implied:—and this is all the record left us of the ceremonial of the earlier portion of the patriarchal age: from Adam to Noah, a period of 1650 years,

all that we know of the religion of God's saints is this—"THEY WALKED WITH GOD;" perhaps the few who loved and served Him through that era of spiritual apostacy, walked more nearly with him than believers since have done. In the immediate enjoyment of his presence they needed not the oft repeated sacrifice, and the blood-stained altar; nor was it until the little family of ransomed ones issued forth from their ark of mercy that the erection of the first altar is recorded—"And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings."* From that time forth, during what may be termed the second portion of the patriarchal age—from Noah to the descent into Egypt, 640 years—the erection of altars and the offering of sacrifices are events of continual occurrence. Whithersoever the Patriarchs wandered, there builded they

* *Genesis* viii. 20.

an altar and worshipped. The very nature of their earthly pilgrimage precluded the adoption of fixed abodes of worship, or the consecration of edifices to the God whom they served. Yet now it was that men began to attach special interest and sanctity to particular spots, endeared to them by the recollection of some hallowed intercourse with heaven, or distinguished by some special interference in their behalf.

Thus Abraham, soon after he had obeyed the call of God, "builded an altar there unto the Lord who had appeared unto him."* The same did he in Bethel :†—and after his first sojourn in Egypt, returning thither, "he called there upon the name of the Lord," in the very spot "where he had made an altar at first."‡ When he "pitched his tent in

* *Genesis* xii. 7. † *Genesis* xii. 8.

‡ *Genesis* xiii. 4.

Mamre," "he built an altar there."* Holy mysteries began to accompany the revelations of heaven to the Father of the faithful—as "the smoking furnace and the burning lamp" which passed between the pieces of his sacrifices.† And at another place, "he planted a grove and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting GOD." Here too we trace the origin of sacred depositories of the dead: the beautiful, the inimitable description of the purchase of a burial place by Abraham, from "the sons of Heth" is familiar to every student of scripture. There he deposited the remains of his beloved Sarah—there he himself was laid—and afterwards Isaac—and Jacob and Joseph! But still they buried their dead in other spots; Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, was buried beneath an oak at Bethel; and Rachel, the much-loved wife of Jacob,

* *Genesis* xiii. 18. † *Genesis* xv. 17.

was buried by the wayside on the road to Bethlehem, and Jacob raised a pillar over her grave, which existed in the days of Moses!

Still no sacred temples reared their heads to greet the traveller on his way: simple was the worship of the patriarchs—"Isaac went out into the fields to meditate" or pray "at eventide;"*—and Jacob's "HOUSE OF GOD," was a mountain top, and a solitary stone, which he raised as a memorial of GOD's gracious visit to his soul. To notice every spot consecrated by the worship of Jacob, or Israel, as he was called of GOD, would weary the reader.† Yet it is interesting to observe that the last patriarchal altar of which we read, was built by Jacob, when, at the command of GOD, he was going down to his son Joseph, in Egypt; there GOD met him and blessed

* *Genesis* xxiv. 63.

† *Genesis* xxxi. 47—55; xxxiii. 20; xxxv. 1—4; &c.

him, and renewed his covenant with him; and there the altar services of the patriarchs appear to have closed. We read of neither altar nor sacrifice in Egypt, nor would the Egyptians have tolerated them. And to this, in great measure, may be attributed the rapid decline of the Israelites from the service of the God of their fathers soon after the death of Jacob and of Joseph.

Thus closes the patriarchal age—the age nearest to Adam—and the age of all others distinguished by simplicity in worship; above 2300 years of the world's existence have rolled by, and as yet no kind of temple is raised to the worship of Almighty God.

A fearful blank of more than 200 years now occurs in the history of divine worship, during which period the knowledge of the true God was almost forgotten among His people. But then an era altogether new, and

wonderful, opens upon us. A system of public worship is established by immediate revelation, presenting a most striking contrast to that of the preceding age. God calls his people out of Egypt;—with a mighty hand and stretched out arm, he delivers them out of the rage of powerful enemies, and gathering them around the base of one of the rugged mountains of the Desert, he makes known his will to a nation by a voice from Heaven itself;—he inscribes his law with his own finger on tables of stone, and commissions his servant Moses to erect a tabernacle, or moveable temple for his worship—to consecrate a priesthood—and to establish a most elaborate and circumstantial system of religious ceremonies.

The transition from the worship of the patriarchs to that of Israel under this new dispensation was sudden and extraordinary. The naked simplicity of the former contrasts most singularly

with the decorated, and minute ceremonial of the latter. But it must be borne in mind as a point of much general importance in this enquiry that not only was every sacrifice, offering, and religious ceremony under this new law prescribed by God himself, and the smallest deviation punishable by the ecclesiastical authorities, but every portion of the tabernacle itself, its curtains, rings, posts, altars —even to the very spoons and forks used by the priests, were matters of direct revelation—Moses received "the pattern of everything in the Mount:"* nothing was left to his own invention or discretion. Matters in themselves of the most trivial importance and which could have no intrinsic value whatever, are here enforced with a scrupulosity and even a rigour, which proves at once that these detailed and burthensome forms of worship were all

* *Hebrews* viii. 5.

of a symbolical and typical character —pointing to mysteries yet unrevealed —and destined to be abolished when the blessings which they represented should be realized.

In this tabernacle, and first temple of the Most High, He was pleased to dwell—here, and here only would he be worshipped; this was indeed a holy place; and thither all must come who desired to find audience with heaven :—pardon for their sin, or assistance and direction in their earthly pilgrimage, could here alone be obtained. Visibly and miraculously present here, Jehovah journeyed with his people—he marched before them in the desert—and when they reached the land of promise "He pitched his tent in Shiloh" and after that "in Salem was his tabernacle and his dwelling place in Zion."* From the days of Moses unto the time of his

* *Psalm* lxxvi. 2.

servant David, (or rather of Solomon) did Jehovah thus inhabit this moveable dwelling: and the remarkable fact is thus presented to us THAT NO LESS THAN 3000 YEARS, OR ONE HALF OF THE WORLD'S PRESENT EXISTENCE, HAD PASSED AWAY BEFORE ANY LOCALITY WAS DEDICATED TO THE ALMIGHTY, OR ANY PERMANENT BUILDING ERECTED TO HIS NAME ! No form of worship existed in Paradise—only a simple altar sufficed for the patriarchs,—and the divine ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation had existed 450 years before the thought of any fixed habitation for the Deity had entered into the hearts of His people !

The particulars connected with the erection of the first stone temple to the Most High are too remarkable to be hastily passed over.

As the Royal Psalmist—the man after GOD'S own heart, sat in his palace, meditating on the great goodness of GOD to him all his days—it appears

suddenly to have struck him that the habitation in which Jehovah dwelt was in all respects inferior to his own : "and he said to Nathan the prophet, I dwell in a house of cedars but the Ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains." The pious prophet catching the feeling of his royal master, immediately responded to it ; encouraged him to pursue the thought, and erect a more suitable dwelling for the Most High—"Do all that is in thine heart ; for GOD is with thee."* In this however it appears he spoke "without the LORD;" and not by the direction of his spirit : for that same night he was charged by the LORD with a very different message to His servant David ; a message which indicates a remarkable unwillingness on the part of GOD to allow a permanent temple to be erected : not simply on the ground that David was

* 1 *Chron.* xvii. 1, 2.

a man of war—and a soldier from his youth, but because the LORD foresaw the fearful superstitions which would take their rise from this source and flow down in baneful streams to the end of time. "And it came to pass the same night, that the word of GOD came to Nathan, saying, go and tell David my servant, thus saith the LORD, THOU SHALT NOT BUILD ME A HOUSE TO DWELL IN. FOR I HAVE NOT DWELT IN A HOUSE SINCE THE DAY THAT I BROUGHT UP ISRAEL, UNTO THIS DAY; BUT HAVE GONE FROM TENT TO TENT AND FROM ONE TABERNACLE TO ANOTHER. WHERESOEVER I HAVE WALKED WITH ALL ISRAEL, SPAKE I A WORD TO ANY OF THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL WHOM I COMMANDED TO FEED MY PEOPLE, SAYING, WHY HAVE YE NOT BUILT ME A HOUSE OF CEDARS?" Whence it appears that the original suggestion was not a matter of revelation from GOD to David, but a spontaneous effusion of pious desire in

David's own soul :—a desire which he was compassionately allowed to cherish —which was subsequently taken under the special guidance of GOD himself; who, while he would not allow David to accomplish it, encouraged him and instructed him to make suitable preparations, that his son Solomon might complete his design.

Thus originated the temple of Solomon—the first permanent building ever erected to the honour of the true GOD since the creation of the world! It would occupy far too much space in a sketch so brief as this must be, to describe its costliness and its glory. Amazing wealth, the accumulation of David's life—the spoils of a thousand battles—together with the free will offerings of the people —were lavished on this gorgeous edifice. It is calculated that David's offerings amounted to eighteen millions of our money, and those of the peo-

ple to at least thirty millions: an enormous sum in those days.*

But the most important circumstance in the narrative is this, viz.: that as in the case of the tabernacle, so of this temple, EVERY PART OF IT WAS REVEALED BY GOD TO DAVID! "THE PATTERN OF ALL HE HAD BY THE SPIRIT:"—"ALL THIS, SAID DAVID, THE LORD MADE ME UNDERSTAND IN WRITING, BY HIS HAND UPON ME, EVEN ALL THE WORKS OF THIS PATTERN."† The minuteness and particularity of this are most observable, and form a striking contrast with the mode of worship in the dispensations which preceded and followed after.

After the decease of David, seven years were occupied by his son Solomon in building this famous temple: —celebrated, not so much for the beauty of its architecture, the richness of its decorations, or its won-

* See 1 *Chronicles* xxix. † xxviii. 11, 12, 19.

derful extent, as for that by which it was distinguished from all other temples which have ever since been erected—it was the visible habitation of the Most High! On the day of its consecration, Jehovah, as of old in the desert, came down and overshadowed his resting place—he filled the temple with his sensible glory, insomuch that the priests who ministered could not stand in the temple by reason of the glory, "for the glory of the LORD filled the house of GOD!"* "The LORD who had said that he would dwell in thick darkness"—had now displayed his majesty, for Solomon "had built a house of habitation for him, and a place for his dwelling for ever."† "Then the fire descended from Heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and the sacrifices which had been offered, and the children of Israel bowed them

* 2 *Chronicles* v. 14. † vi. 1, 2.

selves with their faces to the ground, upon the pavement, and worshipped!"* Thus GOD took possession of his house —this was indeed a holy place—and the only one ever thus consecrated to GOD—the habitation which he had built for himself; there he dwelt shrouded in majesty, in the unapproachable holy of holies for 416 years, until he was expelled by the long continued provocations of his people. Thither all the tribes of the LORD were commanded to approach; here only would He be worshipped; when absent from this temple they must look towards it, and worship towards it—because GOD was there—and all the emblems of salvation were there: and, as now, there is but one new and living way to GOD, even by CHRIST JESUS, so then there was access to JEHOVAH only by means of those rites and ordinances which

* 2 *Chronicles* vii. 1—3.

typified him. It were impossible to estimate too highly the sanctity of that house, and of all its solemnities, AS THEY THEN EXISTED: the religion of ceremony had reached its zenith, and temple worship its glory! Ecclesiastical architecture, in the only style ever sanctioned by GOD, sprung at once to its perfection—it was not wrought out by the slow process of man's invention, but was displayed in all its proportions and beauty by the hand of a people only partially civilized;—because they were guided by Heaven itself. Here, too, the religion of locality and nationality was displayed:—not only the temple was holy—but the very mountains of Zion, its city, its land, its people were holy!" "Holiness to the LORD," was inscribed on its walls and bulwarks:—and had the people continued faithful to their GOD they had been invincible.

But we must hasten to the catastrophe—the end of this glory and

sanctity is well known! God withdrew himself from his rebellious ones—their glorious temple was levelled with the dust, and the people were hurried into the captivity at Babylon! For 70 years and more, they were left without altar, sacrifice, or holy place —and for that period God was left again without a temple dedicated to his name on earth.

At the appointed time, faithful to his promise, the Lord moved their oppressors to restore the captives of Zion, and a second temple is erected —in many respects to be distinguished from the first. Well might the old men, who remembered the glories of the former temple, weep over the foundations of the latter!* Not only were many of the antient treasures and mysteries wanting there—the urim and thummim—the shechina—the ark of Moses—and the tables of the law—

* *Ezra* iii. 12, 13.

but far more than these was wanting —God Himself was not there! He never dwelt but in one temple—his holy fire never descended but on one altar—the first house he filled with his glory—but into this second house he never entered! Although this house was never voluntarily polluted by idolatry—although the temple services were maintained with a strictness unknown before the Babylonish captivity, even to the time of our Lord, yet would not Jehovah return to the place which he had forsaken until a new era should come in, and he would visit it in a manner unknown before.

We cannot mark too strongly this singular distinction between the first and second temple; because upon this depends the fulfilment of a remarkable prophecy the accomplishment of which appears to introduce a new and totally dissimilar era in the history of temple worship. We have seen how far inferior in every respect the second tem-

ple was to that of Solomon; not merely in its extent, costliness, or decorations —nor simply in its deficiency in typical emblems, but chiefly in this—that GOD the LORD never entered it—never dwelt in it.

Yet it was predicted by the Prophet Haggai "that the glory of this latter house should be greater than of the former—and in this place will I give peace saith the LORD OF HOSTS."* Utterly impossible is it for the Jew to show by any reasonable explanation any one point in which this prophecy was fulfilled! In every respect, upon his hypothesis, the second temple was inferior to the first—obviously and PURPOSELY in the Divine Counsels—yet the believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST can show in what the glory of this temple far exceeded that of Solomon's. And in studying the accomplishment of this prediction new light will break upon

* *Haggai* ii. 9.

us relative to the special enquiry we are now pursuing.

We must carry on our minds to one of those interesting scenes which began to attract the attention of the Jewish Rulers, and to excite alike their surprize and enmity. Behold amidst the courts of the second temple, a simple teacher stands ; day after day he is there accompanied by a few obscure persons, his disciples; and the throng of those who for various purposes frequented the precincts of the temple gather around him, attracted by the eloquence of Him who spake as never man spake ! Various are the rumours respecting his person and his office; some think him "a good man," others a deceiver—some said he was "THAT Prophet," others that he was the very Messiah whom they expected. But while they reasoned about him he exclaimed—"I SAY UNTO YOU THAT IN THIS PLACE IS ONE GREATER THAN THE

TEMPLE :" * " The son of man"—" who was the LORD also of the Sabbath Day !" Who but the LORD of the temple could be greater than the temple—the GOD who was worshipped there ? Now was fulfilled the word of the LORD by the prophet Malachi† " the LORD whom ye seek shall suddenly come to HIS temple :"—now was the second temple honoured above the first ; because not only was Jehovah there as of old—but Jehovah MANIFEST : —in the old temple he was not seen—nor could He be—" for no man hath seen GOD at any time"—but now he visits his temple as " GOD manifest in the flesh"—incarnate Deity is here—" Immanuel "—Jehovah-Jesus ! " The great mystery of Godliness" is unfolded, and those who had eyes to see, beheld Him who " was the brightness of his Father's Glory and the express image of his person." ‡ He appeared indeed

* *Matthew* xii. 6—8. † *Malachi* iii. 1. ‡ *Hebrews* i. 3.

in weakness, and humiliation—suited to the character of the times, and the close of a dispensation which was passing away ; the glory of the second temple was not of an earthly, sensible, visible character—it was of a spiritual and mystical nature: and so was this display of Deity in it; its true glory, GOD, was there—but not in pomp and circumstance as of old—not in cloud, and majesty—but veiled in human flesh—there he stood Incarnate Deity —"IN HIM DWELT ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY"—or in a bodily form;* IN A HUMAN BODY.

OBSERVE THE TRANSITION! GOD'S actual presence has passed from a dwelling of curtains, or of stone, into a FLESHLY, LIVING BODY: he never entered before (as has been shewn) into this second temple: in one only temple of stone did he dwell; that was hitherto his only material habita-

* *Colossians* ii. 9.

tion: and now an organic change is about to pass over temple worship—a new temple is built for GOD'S holiness, where it pleaseth him to dwell—a temple not made with hands—the temple of CHRIST'S body!—"A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME!"* Therefore it was that JESUS said again to the Jews, when they sought of him a sign—"DESTROY THIS TEMPLE AND IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP!" "Howbeit," saith the Evangelist, "he spake OF THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY!"

Sufficient importance has seldom been attached to these remarkable facts:—nor has the temple of CHRIST'S holy body been adequately honoured! Yet was THAT a vessel which contained the Deity—and within its compass was comprised all that had been feebly typified by the elaborate ceremonial of both temples! Here was

* *Hebrews* x. 5.

the holy of holies—here the veil of his flesh—here the true altar, sacrifice, high-priest, propitiatory, intercession—all, all in one perfect CHRIST—henceforth the true and only temple of the Godhead, in which all type and prophecy was accomplished and fulfilled. But we must not stop to speak of these things more particularly, lest we lose the thread of our argument of facts which is fast leading us to the introduction of the Christian dispensation. Behold they obey His command—"they destroy this temple"—and behold he fulfils his promise—"on the third day it is raised up again" and rebuilt. As of the two stone temples, so of the first and second temples of CHRIST'S holy body—the glory of the second, his resurrection body, surpassed the glory of the first, which was formed in the womb of his virgin mother by the overshadowing influence of the HOLY GHOST. Tarrying for a little

season longer on earth, the day on which the glory of this true temple should be fulfilled at length arrived; and in the sight of many witnesses, this divine temple was raised up on high, and received up into Heaven—to be adored and worshipped by angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect—who shall behold that Temple for ever and ever!

And when the glorious living temple of CHRIST'S body was elevated from earth to heaven, did the LORD leave himself without some fitting habitation here below? Assuredly not! Where then did he seek a dwelling place for himself? Certainly not within the now desecrated walls of the temple of Jerusalem, which as yet was standing:—certainly not in any building of curtains or of stone—no more—never more has he dwelt, or will he dwell on this earth in any inanimate house of wood or stone or earthly materials.

Having rejected Zion's Temple, he will neither build nor inhabit any other. THE TEMPLE DISPENSATION HAS PASSED AWAY! The religion of ceremony and locality has come to an end—a total change has passed over the dispensation of GOD'S revelation:—yet he has a temple and a habitation among the children of men, which is fully and accurately described in the Christian records:—THAT TEMPLE IS THE LIVING BODIES AND SOULS OF HIS REDEEMED AND SANCTIFIED PEOPLE: HIS CHURCH! THE ONLY CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT! He is even now preparing for himself this building, more glorious than that of Solomon—whose stones are more precious than agates and pearls, and its decorations more florid than human hands can furnish! Of the foundation stone of this great Christian Temple he had spoken long before,—"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation—a stone—a tried stone—a precious corner stone

—a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."* St. Peter was inspired to expound this prophecy, and apply it to the LORD JESUS CHRIST:—"Wherefore it is contained in the scripture, behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore that believe He is precious."† To lay this foundation well—to bid all men see that on this stone alone—(though it be a stone of stumbling to many, and a rock of offence) the whole Church of the living GOD must be based, was and is the great office of the Christian ministry: hence St. Paul, as "a wise master builder," declares—"other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."‡ This is "the rock of our salvation," on which all are

* *Isaiah* xxviii. 16. † 1 *Peter* ii. 6, 7.

‡ 1 *Corinthians* iii. 11.

builded—"the rock of ages." And because they are careful to make this plain, and because they will build on no other foundation stone than this —therefore it is that in an inferior sense "prophets and apostles" are themselves called "A FOUNDATION"—and then "JESUS CHRIST himself is the chief corner-stone."*

And of what material is the superstructure of this Christian temple? No other than living souls! Individual believers. They were described well by Isaiah the prophet as by nature rough, unhewn, misshapen stones in a quarry—or as clay and mire in a pit—and to humble them in their after state he bids them "look to the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged."† Using exactly the same figure, St. Paul says to the believers at Corinth, "Ye are

* *Ephesians* ii. 20. † *Isaiah* li. 1.

God's building"—and he was "a workman who needed not to be ashamed"—and by such means God formed, and fashioned, and polished, and decorated these rough stones until they became polished corners of this spiritual temple. Long and painful may be the process by which a misshapen lump of stone becomes a fair proportioned pillar, or rich architrave, or lovely model of the human frame:—but by the skill, and wisdom, and patience, and love of him who selected the stone from the quarry, and moulded the clay into a symmetrical form, it is at last complete, and becomes a "living stone" in this great living temple! Here, indeed, is divine architecture—here are beauty of design, and perfection of execution. "In Christ all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit!"

Yes, marvellous as this mysterious and divine and holy building is—each individual believer, perfectly in himself, is the temple of GOD—and all believers congregated together form one great, glorious, new-covenant temple—inhabited by GOD himself—THE ONLY MATERIAL BUILDING HE RECOGNIZES UNDER THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION AS ACTUALLY POSSESSED OF HIS PRESENCE! "In whom," that is in CHRIST, "ye also, as lively," or living, "stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD, by JESUS CHRIST."* St. Peter speaks not here of evangelists, or pastors, or teachers as SACRIFICING PRIESTS—but he describes all individual, spiritual, believers as members of this mystical temple, containing in itself, SPIRITUALLY, all that was typically prefigured in the first temple. Holy incense ascending

* 1 *Peter* ii. 5.

continually in the flame of divine love, which glows on the altar of a renewed heart, fragrant to GOD himself—"a sweet smelling savour"—"know you not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?"* "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST, which is in you, which ye have of GOD?"†

This new-covenant temple was solemnly consecrated on the day of Pentecost.‡ Then were assembled "all the believers WITH ONE ACCORD, IN ONE PLACE"—all the living stones of this spiritual temple: and then did GOD the HOLY GHOST, descend from Heaven with circumstances not unlike those which accompanied his consecration of Solomon's temple. On that occasion, when the priests and the people, and their glorious king were

* 1 *Corinthians* iii. 16. † 1 *Corinthians* vi. 19.

‡ *Acts* ii.

all assembled—singing the praises of GOD—"the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD—so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF GOD."* So in the latter and more glorious house there is "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind—AND IT FILLED ALL THE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING"—and tongues of fire sat on the brow of the apostles—"and they WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST!" As the glory of GOD FILLED the old temple, so the HOLY GHOST FILLED this new and better temple! On the same holy mountain—on the rock of Zion—in the favoured city of Jerusalem—stripped indeed of ALL the outward gorgeousness of that royal and priestly dispensation, which was passing away—but as far superior in

* 2 *Chronicles* v. 14.

spiritual beauty, glory, holiness, and display of salvation, as it was inferior in earthly decorations—there was the GOSPEL TEMPLE—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH!

As yet the second temple stood—but, like the forest tree marked to be felled by the woodman's axe, the sentence of destruction and desolation was recorded against it;—and amidst its crumbling towers, and confused ruins—this new, more lovely, more enduring, more spiritual building was even now rising, unperceived by those Jewish builders, who had rejected the only true corner-stone—but filled with the personal presence of JEHOVAH:—for as the Spirit of GOD departed from Saul and entered into David, and an evil spirit from GOD troubled him—so into this Christian temple the spirit of the LORD had entered—and an evil spirit from the LORD had taken possession of that once holy, now desecrated temple of Jeru-

salem—her priests, her altars, and her sacrifices:—so that "they who offered them were as though they slew a man—he that sacrificed a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck—he that offered an oblation, as he that offered swine's blood:" according as it was foretold by the prophet.*

These infatuated men clung to their forms, while the glory and power of them were departed: "ICHABOD"—"ICHABOD"—had mournfully sounded through the courts of the once honoured temple of the LORD! In vain do its priestly builders strive to avert the progress of the new and spiritual temple, which soon became too obvious around them on every side. Their rage and their fury are impotent—their ranks are daily thinned by conversion—and the residue, a wretched remnant, perish amidst the unparalleled destruction in which

* *Isaiah* lxvi. 3.

their temple and their city were alike involved!

But that new covenant temple—see how its long aisles stretch out in rich perspective!—see how lovely its decorations—its fretted roof, its "polished corners," its exquisitely finished pillars! Every grace and virtue, the gift of GOD, is here lavished:—its "LIVING STONES" decorated with patience—love—holiness—faith—zeal; its martyrs shine conspicuous, as if overlaid with gold and precious stones; while they endure all things, and count not their lives dear that they may glorify their GOD! What was Solomon's temple in all its glory when compared with this living temple? How wonderful this work of God—how splendid this display of his grace! Every stone in this temple, however beautifully chiselled—how fair soever its proportions—was once a rough unhewn misshapen block, deeply em-

bedded in the rock of sin—or as slimy clay in the pit of human corruption! How humbling, how worthless its origin! How sovereign the grace, how amazing the skill, the wisdom and the love, which by means varied and diversified, has changed this shapeless mass into a habitation of GOD, through the Spirit! Speak not of the curious or costly inventions of man—or the edifices which he has raised, or can raise—"this is the LORD'S house, wherein it pleaseth him to dwell"—the living bodies and souls of his people sanctified and set apart to his honour and glory!

This living SPIRITUAL BUILDING we AFFIRM TO BE THE ONLY ONE OF WHICH MENTION IS MADE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. The locality of temple worship appears to have passed away with the Mosaic dispensation —again GOD dwells in the moveable tabernacle of his people's bodies, and

the only Church he recognizes is the congregation of the faithful, the assemblies of the saints.

It may here however be objected, that while it is clear that the beautiful figure of a spiritual temple, as illustrative of the Christian Church, may be drawn from the apostolic writings, and may be further illustrated from the allusions of the prophets, yet that it does not follow that this was to be the only temple under the Christian dispensation. This objection would have great force if the architectural phraseology were of only occasional occurrence in the New Testament—or if it were ever applied to a material building. So far from this, however, allusions to the various parts of the temple, and its services, are of constant recurrence in the writings of the apostles, and without one single exception, are always used in a spiritual sense, and applied either to CHRIST himself, or to his

people, whether as worshipping here on earth or finally in glory! The whole argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews turns upon this point: not merely the abolition of the Mosaic ceremonial and temple worship, but its accomplishment and perfection in the spiritual services of the Christian Church: not by the substitution of another elaborate ceremonial in the place of that which was done away, but in the graces of Christian worshippers. The terms connected with temple architecture abound in the apostolic writings—as TABERNACLE*—HABITATION†—HOUSE‡—ALTAR§

* 2 *Corinthians* v. 1, 4.—"The tabernacle of our body;" and 2 *Peter* i. 13, 14. *Hebrews* viii. 2.—"The church is the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man;" and ix. 11.

† *Ephesians* ii. 22.—"Habitation of GOD through the Spirit."

‡ *Hebrews* iii. 6.—"Whose house are we." 1 *Timothy* iii. 15.—"THE HOUSE OF GOD, which is the church of the living GOD!" *Hebrews* x. 21; 1 *Peter* iv. 17.—"Judgment must begin at the house of GOD."

§ *Hebrews* xiii. 10.

SACRIFICE* — DWELLING PLACE† — SANCTUARY‡ — TEMPLE, &c. — but in no single instance are they applied to any thing but to the bodies and souls either of CHRIST or of his people: to the spiritual Church, its head or its members.

The practice of our LORD and his apostles evidently confirms this view. It would seem that while as the Messiah of the Jews He fulfilled all righteousness, by adhering to the temple ordinances, which still existed, He was careful at the same time to separate as much as possible every SERVICE and ORDINANCE connected with the CHRISTIAN RELIGION from the ceremonies and service of the temple. He indicated by his words and deeds that the religion

* *Romans* xii. 1.—"Your bodies a living sacrifice."

† 1 *John* iv. 12—16.—"Dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him." 2 *Timothy* i. 14.—"The HOLY GHOST dwelleth in us." 1 *Corinthians* iii. 16. *John* vi. 56; xiv. 17, &c.

‡ *Hebrews* viii. 2.—"True sanctuary."

of SACRED PLACES was passing away: that the time was at hand when worship in the despised mountains of Samaria, would be as acceptable as on Mount Zion—"so that men worshipped the FATHER in spirit and in truth."* In accordance with this design, while he frequented the temple and taught there—he retired to the mountains for prayer, and to the Garden of Gethsemane, with his disciples, for social communion with GOD. He preached and prayed in all places, and under all available circumstances. And when he would institute the holy sacrament of his body and blood he did it not in the temple, but in a private house, in an upper chamber, in an obscure street in Jerusalem.

When he met his disciples after his resurrection, on the first day of the week, and taught and blessed

* *John* iv. 20—26.

them—and worshipped with them—it was again in an UPPER CHAMBER: —and when he descended in the power of the SPIRIT into his new-covenant-temple, on the day of Pentecost, it is said that they were all with one accord in one place—and that THAT place was not the temple, must be evident from the circumstances of the times. Subsequently, the disciples preached the Gospel every where—in the temple—in the market place—in private houses —or wherever two or three were met together. But it is expressly said, that "while they continued daily with one accord in the temple"—they did not "break bread" there—but "from house to house:"* their communion, or their sacramental supper, was in private houses.

It is true that the circumstances of the primitive Christians would al-

* *Acts* ii. 46.

most prevent the possibility of the erection of churches for some years after the first promulgation of the gospel. But when we consider that the sacred canon comes down to a period little short of one hundred years after CHRIST, it is at least a remarkable fact that no allusion is made throughout the New Testament to ANY BUILDING SET APART FOR DIVINE WORSHIP. The passage in 1 Corinthians, xi. 22 may prove that the early Christians did on some occasions meet together in a place distinct from their private houses, for the reception of the Lord's supper—but to suppose that the expression—"THE CHURCH OF GOD"—means the BUILDING wherein they were assembled, is not only contrary to the whole context, but is opposed to the generally admitted fact that the Greek word there used was not applied to an EDIFICE, or BUILDING, among Christians until more than a century after the Apostle wrote! And that the

holy communion was still administered, and the Gospel preached, in private houses, in other parts of the world, we know from the circumstance recorded to have taken place at Troas, where "On the first day of the week," the Christian sabbath, "the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD, and Paul preached unto them;" "and there were many lights in THE UPPER CHAMBER where they were gathered together!" *

Indeed it would tax the ingenuity of the most ardent worshipper of primitive Christian architecture to discover one line in the New Testament to prove that separate, much less consecrated buildings were set apart, or intended to be set apart, during the lives of the holy apostles, for Christian worship. Such a custom, however becoming and needful in the subsequent ages of the Church, can-

* *Acts*, xx. 7, 8.

not therefore claim to be PRIMITIVE, APOSTOLICAL, or SCRIPTURAL. As far as the inspired writings of the New Testament are concerned, we therefore re-affirm—that they recognize no TEMPLE but the spiritual one which we have attempted to describe—and that upon the subject of CHRISTIAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE they observe a remarkable and studied silence.

And thus ends our brief notice of Church Architecture, SCRIPTURALLY considered, from the beginning:—but even this rapid survey is calculated to impress upon our minds the wisdom of GOD in adjusting the character of his worship under succeeding dispensations to the genius of the dispensation to which it belonged. There was the simple and even rude altar of the patriarchs, suited to the simple age in which they lived:—then the elaborate ceremonial of the Levitical law, adapted to a dispensation of type and emblem, destined to be abolished

when a more perfect revelation should be made:—and then the Christian worship—how few its ordinances, how simple its services! The Sabbath day, the two holy sacraments, and the institution of an order of men expressly dedicated to the spiritual services of the Church—these comprised all the positive enactments of this new code—but as to the kind of buildings in which they were to assemble and worship, their Great Master and his immediate followers were silent. But this general principle is deducible from the whole analogy of God's dealings with His people: viz. that the CHURCHES IN WHICH CHRISTIANS WORSHIP SHOULD, AS TO EXTERNAL DECORATIONS, HARMONIZE WITH THE GENIUS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

Here then we might at once turn to the modern attempts to revive the decorative style of Church Architecture; and testing it by the general

principles now established, and by the practice of the apostles and their converts in the first century, we might at once decide the question,—whether it is consistent with the simplicity and spirituality of Christian worship to lavish vast sums of money on the decoration of the outward structure and the mere ceremonies of worship? But inasmuch as the present disposition extravagantly to adorn our Churches is not an INVENTION but an IMITATION—and as the perfection of modern effort consists in copying that which is considered ANTIQUITY—it will be more satisfactory to glance at the rise and progress of that style of Architecture which is to be restored; and if we should trace its source to some of the most benighted and corrupt periods of the Church, and find it identified with, and contributing towards, the superstitions which were then prevalent, our fears will at once be awakened, and a holy jealousy will

be excited in our minds, lest with the restoration of the varied emblems of superstition and idolatry—the corruptions with which they were allied should gradually be introduced along with them.

Ascending, then, to the earliest days of the Christian Church, of which there are but scanty records in uninspired history, we find a singular conformity with all we have traced in the canon of scripture. It is a disputed point whether any churches, or distinct places of worship, existed at all during the SECOND CENTURY. Friends and foes admitted in these early days that "the Christians had neither ALTARS, nor TEMPLES, nor IMAGES; but affirmed that GOD could be worshipped in every place, and that his best temple upon earth is the heart of man." Lardner says, (vol. ii. p. 212) "Moreover it is now generally allowed that in the first and second centuries, Christians had not

any regular or spacious buildings to meet in." And again, (vol. IV. p. 526) "It may be suspected that the early Christian Churches were only private houses, or buildings very like them, consisting of several rooms, separated from each other by walls and partitions." The earliest authorities given upon this point occur at the commencement of the THIRD CENTURY: when it appears, that places of Christian worship began to be erected and to be multiplied. But it is most important to observe that, until the close of this century, NONE of those peculiarities of construction were known, which are now considered ANTIENT, PRIMITIVE, and almost necessary to the very character of any building to be termed A CHURCH.

As yet churches were not built in THE FORM OF A CROSS—the distinctions of CHANCEL and NAVE—and the separation and portioning off one part of the congregation from another

—were unknown! The original and most antient form was oblong—and is said to have been intended to imitate a SHIP—alluding at once to the Ark of Noah—and to the tempest-tossed character of the people of GOD.* Hence the subsequent term NAVE—from *vavs*, A SHIP—not from *vaos*, A TEMPLE. The latter term was rejected with indignation by the early Christians, as well as its kindred word *βωμος*, ALTAR—as savouring either of Judaism, or of heathenism. Well would it have been for the Church if the same jealousy had been continued in succeeding ages; and well were it for us, if the same spirit could be awakened now! Until the Fourth Century there is no trace of the CONSECRATION of churches†—and the extravagant notions about holy places had not yet become pre-

* So Tertullian, *de bapt*, and De Pudicit.

† See Dr. Hook's *Church Dictionary*—under "*consecration.*"

valent. Neither is there any notice of the ASPECT of churches—the virtue attached to building them due east and west—had not yet been discovered; nor yet the superstitious and unfounded notion that one part is more holy than another. In fact it may safely be affirmed that not one of the peculiarities of the churches of the subsequent ages had been introduced at the close of the third century—and therefore it follows that the whole system of structure and internal arrangement now so strenuously advocated, and which so many persons are devoting themselves to introduce, are copies of a later and more corrupt age, and are neither PRIMITIVE, APOSTOLIC, nor SCRIPTURAL!

With the opening of the fourth century a change, at first gradual, but subsequently rapid and widely diffused, took place in regard to Church Architecture. Then it was that the opinion became prevalent that

churches should be divided into three parts, distinguishing the CLERGY, the FAITHFUL, and the CATECHUMENS:—a servile imitation of the division of the Jewish temple—the holy of holies—the sanctuary—and the court! It would far exceed the limits of this Essay to follow the infinity of details of structure which followed from this commencement. But it would be easy to trace to this one false step all the divisions, and subdivisions, the chapels, sanctuaries, shrines, and redundant superstitions which subsequently disfigured the buildings in which professed Christians worshipped. The principle once admitted, that Christian presbyters were sacrificing or interceding priests—and of necessity holier than the people to whom they administered—the consequences became unavoidable—and they are inscribed in visible characters on every antient ecclesiastical building still remaining in the world. In fact

the ceremonies of Christian worship in the fourth century lost alike their simplicity and spirituality; Levitical and mythological observances were interwoven with Christian services, and the ecclesiastical structures were built with a view to accommodate the superstitions of the times.

THEN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AROSE AND FLOURISHED! Then ecclesiastical buildings were multiplied, in which scenes were enacted alike disgraceful to Christianity, morality, and reason. In fact, the huge piles which were raised towards the middle and close of this century might more justly be considered as vast mausoleums—in which truth, scripture, light, salvation, and common sense were entombed together—than churches of the saints, in which "the GOD of the spirits of all flesh" was to be worshipped, through the SON of his love. Superstition, and the extravagant decoration of churches, progressed together—now

was the age of lying wonders, false miracles, holy places, altars, shrines, of MONACHISM and CELIBACY—with all the monstrous evils which naturally followed in their train. The testimonies of the early fathers of this age, and even of preceding ages, establish the existence of the evils which they laboured in vain to suppress. They expected "to gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles"—and they wondered that they were disappointed! The holiest and best of the fathers, along with much precious truth, cherished the very principles whose baneful, though legitimate, fruits they sincerely lamented!

The Church Architecture of that and the following centuries evidenced the spiritual state of Christendom, and contributed its share towards establishing the almost universal reign of spiritual darkness which followed. The mania for extravagant decoration of Christian temples, as they were

now called, reached its height, when, at the opening of the sixth century, JUSTINIAN I. encouraged the infatuated and false devotions of the people, who loaded the priests and their shrines with costly decorations, which they were taught to believe would contribute to the salvation of their souls. This emperor it was who raised that vast and pompous temple, the church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople—of which its imperial architect is said to have exclaimed, in the pride of his heart, "I HAVE SURPASSED THEE, O SOLOMON!"

Spiritual pride and superstition seem to have exhausted themselves in this age—and whether from the subsequent disturbances of Europe, or from some other cause, the mania for ecclesiastical architecture, in a measure, subsided after this period; until, in the tenth century, the opinion, universally prevalent, that the end of the world was approaching,

prevented entirely the erection of new churches, and even, in some cases, suspended the repairs which were necessary to maintain the existing edifices. In the ELEVENTH CENTURY architectural taste revived, and the art was cultivated with great assiduity until, in the THIRTEENTH CENTURY, CHURCH ARCHITECTURE REACHED THE HEIGHT OF ITS PERFECTION!

What the spiritual condition of Christendom was, during this same period, it were superfluous to record. But whether it be coincidence or causality, the fact must be admitted that whenever extravagant attention was paid to Church Architecture, then the most debasing superstition prevailed, and the most notorious corruptions were dominant. Superstition and church decoration were coeval from the beginning: departure from simplicity in doctrine and worship, was accompanied with an equal departure from the simplicity of primi-

tive architecture: each contributed to promote the other—until, in this thirteenth century, spiritual darkness, the most profound, dwelt and reigned in the gloomy aisles of structures, architecturally speaking, of surpassing beauty.

The greater part of all the splendid ecclesiastical buildings, whether religious houses or churches, which arose after the eleventh century were erected by funds drawn from the resources of the deepest superstition! The splendid cathedral of Notre Dame, at Paris—St. Peter's at Rome itself—and many other churches of the same date, were built with money RAISED BY THE SALE OF INDULGENCIES! All the finest specimens of Gothic architecture, which now form the models of imitation to our modern artists, are monuments of the most debasing ignorance, and the most notorious imposture. The pointed arch—and the fretted roof—and the

gloomy crypt—and the secret stairs —and stone altars—and elevated chancels, credence tables, and painted windows; the reredos, the trypticks, the reliquary, &c. &c. are the emblems of a gloomy, false, idolatrous, and persecuting worship, from which we were mercifully delivered at the blessed Reformation!

Yet it is to these—and none but these—that the modern students of Church Architecture would bring us back. There is no relic of the mediæval, or dark ages, which is not now commended—and efforts are making to introduce them even into our parish churches. Without loading my pages with a multiplicity of evidence to prove the lengths to which this modern mania would lead us, let the following suffice:—

"The Ecclesiologist, published by the Cambridge Camden Society," (Nos. xxvii. and xxviii. of November, 1843,) contains enough to awaken the fears

of all who prefer simplicity of faith and worship to the meretricious decorations of the dark ages. It must be remembered that this publication is authenticated by a powerful society, at the head of which are found some honoured names of distinguished persons, who it is hoped would be far from sanctioning that which is here put forth to the public as authenticated by them.

After informing his reader "that the rubricks and canons of his church are apparently opposed to each other —and actual usage different from both —and that the EXPLANATIONS OF BISHOPS, in THEIR VISITATION ARTICLES, are at VARIANCE AND OBSCURE"—affording a fair specimen of the irreverent style in which the advocates of ecclesiastical antiquity speak of the writings of the English church, and of her venerable Bishops—the reviewer proceeds to commend the work before him, and to "wish it all success,

though only a collection of extracts;" chiefly, it should seem, for the following reasons:—Because "PRECEDENTS ARE ADDUCED FOR LIGHTED TAPERS, THE CONSECRATION OF ALTAR-PLATE, INCENSE, CENSERS, CRUCIFIXES, HANGINGS, STONE ALTARS, WAFER-BREAD, MITRES, PASTORAL STAVES, PROCESSIONAL CROSSES, RECONCILIATION OF CHURCHES, FRANKINCENSE, BOATS, TRICANALIA (FOR THE WATER OF MIXTURE), &c. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE PRECEDENTS OUGHT TO INFLUENCE CHURCH RESTORERS IN THE PRESENT DAY, IS A FURTHER QUESTION!!"—(Ecclesiologist, p. 50.) The animus of the reviewer, and of the society which he represents, cannot be mistaken; although he may think that the time is not come "for the restoration of those vestments and ornaments to which the English Church is entitled."—(p. 51.) How much he longs for that day is evident from the delight he displays at the discovery and restoration of cer-

tain Popish antiquities in various churches.

"Some new poppy heads of creditable design" are found in one church: in another, "the walls of the CLERESTORY have been plastered—the east window renewed—A FINE PERPENDICULAR REREDOS has been brought to light, consisting of a CENTRAL TABERNACLE—A SET-OFF FOR TAPERS—A RELIQUARY on the north, and SACRISTY DOOR on the south:" and, as a great desideratum, "a good many PUES have been cleared away." In another "early-decorated church," the reviewer is gratified with the discovery "of a large fresco painting, representing the torments of the damned:"—hopes are expressed that as the prejudices against painted windows are passing away, so "their appropriate and necessary accompaniment, painting on walls and roofs, will speedily be revived." (p. 57.) In an article in the preceding number various other church ornaments are

recommended with an air of conscious authority: especially for the eastern wall of a parish church. For this "HANGINGS OF COSTLY MATERIALS AND OF SUITABLE COLOUR" are proposed!—We might imagine that we had returned to the tabernacle in the wilderness! Pictures al-fresco are next commended as "altar-pieces"—"and where there is no other REREDOS, and where the church has an oil painting, we wish STRONGLY TO RECOMMEND THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF TRIPTYCHS. A TRIPTYCH WILL ALWAYS GIVE A FITTING DIGNITY TO AN ALTAR!" (p. 34.) Economy will support this view: "Far less money than is expended on many showy skreens would procure a GOOD DEVOUT PICTURE! the leaves of the triptych, in ordinary cases, being simply DIAPERED. A demand for ECCLESIASTICAL PAINTING would soon command a supply," . . . . . "and what should hinder that foreign artists of the new Catholic school should supply us with

what we want?" ..... "WHAT MIGHT NOT BE HOPED FOR IF THE CHURCH WOULD ONCE AGAIN MAKE PAINTING HER HANDMAID?"

What indeed! All that Rome herself could desire! All that could rival the darkest ages, when painting, sculpture, music, and all the arts lent their aid towards bewitching the people with the abominable idolatries of an apostate church!

What the martyred Bishop of Gloucester would have thought of such propositions for the restoration of Popish emblems, we may judge from the following extract from Hooper's IV. Sermon on Jonas (pp. 491—2):—*

"But this prayer of Jonas is so acceptable, it might be thought of some men that the place where Jonas prayed in should have bettered it; as the foolish opinion of the world is at this time, that judgeth the prayer said

* Parker Society's Edition.

at the high altar to be better than that which is said at the quire, that in the quire better than it that is said in the body of the church, that in the body of the church better than the prayer said in the field, or in a man's chamber. But our prophet sayeth, the LORD hath no respect to the place, but unto the heart and faith of him that prayeth; and that appeareth; for penitent Jonas prayeth out of the whale's belly, and miserable Job upon the dung-heap, Daniel in the cave of the lions, Hieremy in the clay pit, the thief upon the cross, Saint Stephen under the stones. Wherefore the grace of GOD is to be prayed for in every place and every where, as our necessity shall have need and wanteth solace. Although I commend the prayer made to GOD in the name of CHRIST to be like in every place, because that our necessity requireth help in every place; yet I do not condemn the public place of prayer,

where as GOD's word is preached, his holy sacraments used, and common prayer made to GOD, but allow the same, and sorry it is no more frequented and haunted. But this I would wish, that the magistrates should put both the preacher, minister, and the people in one place, and SHUT UP THE PARTITION CALLED THE CHANCEL, THAT SEPARATETH THE CONGREGATION OF CHRIST ONE FROM THE OTHER, AS THOUGH THE VEIL AND PARTITION OF THE TEMPLE IN THE OLD LAW YET SHOULD REMAIN IN THE CHURCH; WHERE INDEED, ALL FIGURES AND TYPES ENDED IN CHRIST. And in case this were done, it should not only express the dignity and grace of the New Testament," [instead of the dignity and grace of high altars] "but also cause the people the better to understand the things read there by the minister; and also provoke the minister to a more study of the things that he readeth, lest he should be found by the judgment of the congre-

gation not worthy neither to read nor to minister in the Church. Farther, that such as would receive the holy communion of the precious body and blood of Christ, might both hear and see plainly what is done, AS IT WAS USED IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, when as the abomination done upon altars was not known, nor the sacrifice of CHRIST'S precious blood so conculcated and trodden under foot."

Oh, for a revival of the spirit that stirred our martyred Reformers—our truly Protestant Bishops and Archbishops, who knew what Popery was—and the true character of her idolatrous emblems! Let us listen to the warnings of other of the defenders of the reformed religion established in these realms. Thus that learned scholar, and Godly Bishop, Pilkington—one of the fugitives driven from their native land by the persecutions of Queen Mary—but afterwards restored in better times—and placed in the

see of Durham, and employed in the revision of our Protestant Prayer Book; —speaking of the true nature of Christian worship, he saith:—

"And therefore GOD doth not so much require of us to build him a house of stone and timber; but hath willed us to pray in all places, and hath taken away that Jewish and Popish holiness which is thought to be more in one place than another. All the earth is the LORD's, and he is present in all places, hearing the petitions of them which call on him in faith. Therefore those bishops which think with their conjured water to make one place more holy than the rest, are no better than JEWS—deceiving the people, and teaching that only to be holy which they have censed, crossed, oiled, and breathed upon."*

And in the same spirit, further on, he says:—

* "Exposition of the prophet Aggeus." (pp. 62, 63.) —Parker Society's Edition.

"The pope's church hath all things pleasant in it to delight the people withal: as, for the eyes, their God hangs in a rope, images gilded, painted, carved most finely, copes, chalices, crosses of gold and silver, banners, &c. with relics and altars; for the ears, singing, ringing, and organs piping; for the nose, frankincense sweet, to wash away sins (as they say); holy water of their own hallowing and and making; priests an infinite sort, masses, trentals, diriges, pardons, &c. But where the Gospel is preached, they knowing that God is not pleased but only with a pure heart, they are content with an honest place appointed to resort together in, though it were never hallowed by Bishop at all, but HAVE ONLY A PULPIT, A PREACHER TO THE PEOPLE, A DEACON FOR THE POOR, A TABLE FOR THE COMMUNION, WITH BARE WALLS, OR ELSE WRITTEN WITH SCRIPTURES, HAVING GOD'S ETERNAL WORD SOUNDING ALWAYS AMONGST THEM

IN THEIR SIGHT AND EARS; and last of all, they should have good discipline, correct faults, and keep good order in all their meetings. But as they wept to see this second house no more costly nor pleasant to the eye; so our poor papists weep to see our Churches so bare, saying they be like barns, there is nothing in them to make curtsey unto, neither saints nor yet their old little God."

In such strain did they write who had recently smarted under the opposite extreme of superstitious and idolatrous decorations. Theirs was not the effeminate, specious charity now inculcated, but the true love which proclaims error in faithful language, that precious souls may escape from it.

In like manner another champion of the Reformation—a worthy fellow-sufferer, and companion in affliction with the former, when restored, and enthroned successively in the Sees of London, York, and Canterbury, thus

" instructed the Laity;" and especially the churchwardens and questmen.

" 5 ITEM.—That the churchwardens shall see that in their churches and chapels ALL ALTARS BE UTTERLY TAKEN DOWN AND CLEAR REMOVED even unto the FOUNDATION, and the place where they stood paved, and the wall whereunto they joined WHITED OVER AND MADE UNIFORM WITH THE REST, SO AS NO BREACH OR RUPTURE APPEAR: And that the altar stones be broken, defaced, and bestowed to some common use. And that the ROOD LOFTS be taken down and altered, so that the upper boards and timber thereof, both behind and above where the rood lately did hang, and also the seller or loft, be quite taken down unto the cross-beam, whereunto the partition between the choir and the body of the church is fastened, and that the said beam have some convenient crest put upon the same. And that all the boards, beams, and other stuff of the ROOD-

LOFTS be sold by the churchwardens to the use of the church, so as no part thereof be kept and observed."*

Similar injunctions were issued by him to the province of Canterbury, when he was preferred to Lambeth. Thus did these holy Fathers of the Reformed English Church pull down, destroy and abolish, those emblems of superstition which their unworthy descendants are labouring to restore, with a "zeal not according to knowledge."

And if these authorities are not sufficient, let us learn wisdom from the accredited Homilies of our Church. We have seen how the advocates of the new Catholic school would deck our parish churches—let us now see how positively our church forbids it!†

* See Remains of Archbishop Grindall, published by the Parker Society. (p. 134.)

† HOMILY AGAINST PERIL OF IDOLATRY, AND SUPERFLUOUS DECKING OF CHURCHES.

"Contrary to the most manifest doctrine of scripture; and contrary to the usage of the primitive church, which was most pure and uncorrupt; and contrary to the sentences and judgments of the most antient, learned, and godly doctors of the church—as hereafter shall appear—the corruption of these latter days hath brought into the church infinite multitudes of images; and the same, WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE TEMPLE ALSO, have decked with gold and silver, PAINTED WITH COLOURS, set them with stone and pearl, CLOTHED THEM WITH SILKS AND PRECIOUS VESTURES, fancying untruly, that to be the chief decking and adorning of the temple or house of GOD, and that all people should be the more moved to the due reverence of the same, if all corners thereof were glorious, and glistering with gold and precious stones. Whereas they, indeed, by the said images, and SUCH GLORIOUS DECKING OF THE

TEMPLE, have nothing at all profited such as were wise and of understanding; but have thereby greatly hurt the simple and unwise," &c. &c.

So in the third part of the same homily "the excessive painting, gilding, and decking," not only of images, "but of the temples and churches, is further answered and confuted." Antiquity is appealed to, and the most antient fathers, against these pompous decorations. "In their times the world was won to Christendom, not by gorgeous, gilded, and painted temples of Christians which had scarcely houses to dwell in; but by the godly, and, as it were, golden minds and firm faith of such as in all adversity and persecution professed the truth of our religion."

"Unto the time of Constantine," (confirming what has been already advanced in these pages,) "by the space of above 300 years after our SAVIOUR CHRIST, WHEN CHRISTIAN RELIGION WAS MOST

PURE AND INDEED GOLDEN, Christians had but low and poor conventicles, and simple oratories, yea, caves under the ground, called cryptæ, where they for fear of persecution assembled secretly together."

The Homily proceeds to notice the "ABUSE" of dedicating churches to "SAINTS," and cites Jerome, with a caution "that he was too great a liker and allower of external and outward things"—yet even HE says—"Many build walls, and erect pillars of churches: the smooth marbles do glister, the roof shineth with gold, the altar is set with precious stones; but of the ministers of CHRIST there is no election or choice. Neither let any man object or allege against me the rich temple that was in Jewry, the table, candlesticks, incense, ships, platters, cups, mortars, and other things, all of gold. THEN were these things allowed of the LORD, when the priests offered sacrifices, and the blood of beasts was

accounted the redemption of sins.—Howbeit all these things went before in figure." ..... "Thus you see," saith the Homily, "how St. Jerome teacheth the sumptuousness among the Jews to be a FIGURE TO SIGNIFY, and NOT AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW."—"No more did the old godly bishops and doctors of the church allow the over sumptuous furniture of temples and churches, with plate, vessels of gold, silver, and precious vestments. St. Chrysostom saith, In the ministry of the holy sacraments there is no need of golden vessels, but of golden minds. St. Jerome commendeth Exuperius, bishop of Tolose, that he carried the sacrament of the LORD'S body in a wicker basket, and the sacrament of his blood in a glass, and so cast covetousness out of the church. ..... Likewise were the vestures used in the church in old time very plain and single, and nothing costly."

All "this is noted, not against churches and temples which are most

necessary, and ought to have their due use and honour—nor against the convenient cleanliness and ornament thereof—but against the SUMPTUOUSNESS and ABUSES of the temples and churches. For it is a church and temple also that glistereth with no marble, shineth with no gold or silver, glistereth with no pearls nor precious stones; BUT WITH PLAINESS AND FRUGALITY, signifieth no proud doctrine nor people, but humble, frugal, and nothing esteeming earthly and outward things, but gloriously decked with inward ornaments; according as the prophet declareth saying, "THE KING'S DAUGHTER IS ALTOGETHER GLORIOUS INWARDLY."*

In like manner, in the "SERMON ON REPAIRING CHURCHES," "Solomon's temple is declared to be a figure of CHRIST, and we know," saith the Homily, "that now, in the time of the clear light of JESUS CHRIST, the

* Sermon against peril of Idolatry.—Part iii.

SON OF GOD, ALL SHADOWS, FIGURES AND SIGNIFICATIONS ARE UTTERLY GONE, all vain and unprofitable ceremonies, both Jewish and Heathenish, FULLY ABOLISHED. And therefore our churches are not set up for figures and significations of Messias and CHRIST to come, but for other godly and necessary purposes. ..... Moreover the church or temple is counted and called holy, YET NOT OF ITSELF, but because GOD'S people resorting thereunto are holy, and exercise themselves in holy and heavenly things." And the object for which churches are built is declared to be—"FIRST, there to hear and learn the blessed word and will of the everlasting GOD—SECONDLY, that there, the blessed sacraments, which our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST hath ordained and appointed, should be duly, reverently, and decently ministered—and THIRDLY," for public worship.

An ORDER of intention the reverse of that which some of our modern

churchmen would approve of! The DECORATION commended by our Homilies is very modest:—"When GOD's house, the church, is well adorned"—not with a fine reredos—and a pious picture of the new Catholic school—but "with places convenient to sit in, with the pulpit for the preacher, with the LORD's table" (not a high altar) "for the ministration of his holy supper—with the font to christen in, and also is kept clean, comely, and sweetly, the people are more desirous and the more comforted to resort thither, and to tarry there the whole time appointed them."—And in the conclusion of this Sermon the people are called upon to rejoice in this primitive simplicity.

"Wherefore, O ye good Christian people, ye dearly beloved in CHRIST JESUS, ye that glory not in worldly and vain religion, in FANTASTICAL ADORNING AND DECKING, but rejoice in heart to see the glory of GOD truly set forth,

and the churches restored to their antient and godly use—render your most hearty thanks to the goodness of ALMIGHTY GOD, who hath in our days stirred up the hearts, not only of his Godly preachers and ministers, but also of his faithful and most Christian magistrates and governors to bring such Godly things to pass."

It is feared we have rather occasion earnestly to pray that it would please GOD to awaken the minds of Godly pastors and magistrates to return to the simplicity and fidelity of their sainted and martyred Reformers in this matter!

One more reference must be made to the Homilies, throughout which authorized lectures of our Church this subject is handled in the same manner. In the Sermon on "THE PLACE AND TIME OF PRAYER;" (part ii.)—the Papists are said to have defiled their churches "with gross abusing and filthy corrupting of the LORD'S Supper, the blessed sacrament of his

body and blood; with an infinite number of toys and trifles of their own devices, to make a goodly outward show, and to deface the plain, simple, and sincere religion of JESUS CHRIST." And the popishly inclined persons are reproved for forsaking the church "because it is altogether scoured of such gay gazing sights, as their gross fantasy was greatly delighted with;" so that a woman is represented as saying to her neighbour—"Alas, gossip, what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone; since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the organs that we could before?"

It is possible that in these last days CHURCHES might be named where this good man's "gossip" might still find the delight of her heart, in almost as great perfection as before the Reformation!

But, in the close of this discourse, the preacher again incites his hearers, instead of lamenting the removal of such Popish mimes, rather "this ought we greatly to praise for—that such superstitious and idolatrous manners, as were utterly naught, and defaced GOD's glory, are utterly abolished, as they most justly deserved; and yet those things that either GOD was honoured with, or his people edified, are decently retained, and in our churches comely practised."

Warnings and exhortations from the lips of such men as those whose writings have now been quoted, ought to have weight on the minds and consciences of their descendants, who enjoy their Christian liberties through their fidelity and courage. It is hardly possible to conceive any thing more opposed to the modern mania for the restoration of architectural relics than the entire testimony of the Fathers of the Reformation: and surely they must be

at least as competent judges of the tendency of these antient decorations of churches as we are! He, indeed, must be infatuated by a superstitious love of antiquity, or must be ignorant of all the natural tendencies of man as illustrated in his religious history from the beginning, who can persuade himself that all these relics of the deepest superstition can be restored, and the eyes of the people become familiarized with them, without producing the most baneful effects upon the character of the national religion. It is easy to be conceived that many young enthusiasts in the restoration of our churches to the pattern of by-gone ages, are far from intending to introduce the superstitious usages with which these things were connected. Just as artists and professional persons are reported to study paintings of a most objectionable character without any corruption of their morals, while they forget the effect which will be produced

on ordinary minds by their exhibition:—so these students of antient architecture, disconnecting the objects of their artistical admiration from the errors in doctrine and discipline in which they originated, do not know, or do not consider, what irreparable mischief they may occasion to the public mind!

Yet to the furtherance of such objects—the restoration of churches to their original superstitious models, are we now urged to contribute vast sums of money, while the teeming thousands of our population have neither school house, nor church, nor pastor, nor teacher! At the risk of being charged with acting upon "the principle of Judas Iscariot,"* it may be affirmed, that under such circumstances, this is money grievously wasted. At all times, and under any circumstances—the restoration of such emblems of an idola-

* See Dr. Hook's *Church Dictionary*—under the head of *Church*.

trous superstition ought to be opposed by a Protestant clergy and laity—but in the present times most especially—when not only is every farthing valuable that can be raised for encreasing church accommodation for the people;—but when there are not wanting those who are ready to avail themselves of the EMBLEMS of superstition to revive the USAGES of superstition.

Were the present disposition to lavish money on decorative church architecture a mere matter of taste, or of cultivated pursuit, it might be less reprehensible;—but when this art is magnified into such undue importance—when it swallows up funds which would avail to build many a church for the poor man—and when, above all, it is made subservient to the introduction of superstitious practices—surely it is time for all who love the truth to rally around it, and to resist, by all lawful measures, the revival of antiquated heresies by means of WOOD

AND STONE, AND TAPESTRY, AND HANGINGS, AND PICTURES, AND IMAGES!

It is one of our worst signs that some faithful watchmen do not see the danger which threatens them;—they regard these pursuits as trivial and childish—as mere matters of fancy; and do not perceive that it is impossible to restore the IMAGES OF SINS without fostering the introduction of the SINS THEMSELVES! They vainly imagine that we may have crosses, pictures, and images in our churches without either worshipping them, or promoting the worship of them:—they may discover their error when too late!

In vain do we look for any similarity between these popish, or mediæval restorations, and the simple unadorned worship of the times of the apostles, or of the century which succeeded them:—there is no authority for this extravagant decoration of buildings in the New Testament—none in

the truly primitive church—and it is opposed to the spiritual character of the dispensation under which we live. In exact proportion as attention has been paid to such things in any age of Christianity—and places, vessels, and ceremonies have been esteemed holy—in that proportion has the church lost sight of the true sanctity of the heart, and renewal of the spirit by divine grace. And earnestly is it hoped that ere long the dangerous tendencies of these pursuits will become apparent to all right minded persons; and that the true Protestantism, which is the hidden energy of our church, may awake from her slumbers, and shaking off at once the follies of her deluded sons, may exhibit herself in her genuine resemblance to pure, primitive, scriptural Christianity, before it was corrupted by the Judæo-pagan superstitions of the fourth century, or disfigured by the more modern additions of Popery.

But it may be asked in conclusion —would you then desecrate the houses of GOD in the land—strip them of all their ornaments—or assemble the people in barns, or in the open air, to worship GOD? Far from it! Although it is denied, in accordance with the cloud of witnesses of the Protestant Reformation, that any forms of any church can impart the same kind of CONSECRATION and CHARACTER of holiness to a Christian building as that which was imparted to the one only temple in which JEHOVAH Himself dwelt:—while it is denied that the consecration of churches can be argued from the New Testament, or can be established by reference to a dispensation which, IN THIS RESPECT, bore no analogy to that established by CHRIST—yet would all pious Christians humbly and thankfully acquiesce in that ordinance of man, through the church, which has set apart a house in which the rites of our blessed re-

ligion may be performed, the holy GOD may be worshipped, CHRIST may be preached, and the souls of men converted and edified! That such a building should be severed from all secular uses, and devoted to holy services, is accordant with all the best feelings alike of the natural and spiritual man! —But that one part of that building is more holy than another—that one should be elevated above another—that one should be for the priests, and another for the people—one for those initiated in the mysteries, and another part for the uninitiated, is utterly repudiated as UNSCRIPTURAL—UNSANCTIONED BY PRIMITIVE USAGE—AND CALCULATED TO INTRODUCE FALSE NOTIONS AND SUPERSTITIOUS PRACTICES.

And as to the decorations and ornaments of churches; if any rule could be laid down it would be this;—that a Christian church should not only in all its details harmonize with the simple and spiritual genius of Christianity

—but that there should be an adaptation to its position in its own locality. There is the same propriety attainable in this—the "quid decens, and quid non"—as in the character of a Christian's dress. Our garments were originally given us to hide our shame, and we have made them the food of pride, and the means of displaying our conceit and folly—so it is with our churches. We have proved that they are memorials of our sin and separation from God, while they bring us near to him;—and we by senseless, extravagant decoration make them minister to our pride and arrogance!—But as in the one case, so in the other—the perfection of a Christian's apparel is such an adaptation to his situation in life, that no one should remark either its affected simplicity, or its studied costliness;—so should it be with church decorations. Let the modest village church yet raise its humble spire among the cottages by which it

is surrounded—and amidst the palaces of the great, let the noble church, with its suitable architectural beauties, and becoming ceremonial, appear worthy to stand among the abodes of wealth or rank, by which it is chiefly furnished with guests:—"Let all things be done decently and in order!"*

* 1 *Corinthians* xiv. 40.

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